RICE vs. LOUISIANA TECH

Records: Rice 1-6, 1-2 Conference USA; Louisiana Tech 3-4, 1-2.
Series history: Louisiana Tech leads 6-4.
Key players: Rice — QB Sam Glaesmann, RB Jordan Myers, LB Brian Womac; Louisiana Tech — QB J'Mar Smith, RB Jarred Craft, WR Marlon Watts.

Who has the edge
Offense — Louisiana Tech. The Bulldogs are 69th in scoring offense (27.9), Rice is 129th, averaging one point more than last-place Kent State (10.0). And actually they have the fewest total points scored in the FBS, with 77, because Kent State (90) has played one more game. LaTech averages 101 yards more than Rice. Smith is 125-of-226 passing for 1,723 yards, nine TDs and four INTs.

Defense — Louisiana Tech. The Bulldogs are a little better in every defensive category, including opponent third-down percentage (42.0) and red-zone scores (17-of-23). They also have 11 takeaways, compared to five for Rice. The Owls allowed 7.8 yards per rush last week against Texas-San Antonio. Louisiana Tech's opponents are averaging less than 5 yards per carry on the season.

Special teams — Louisiana Tech. Teddy Veal is one of the top punt returners in the country, averaging a healthy 10.3 yards on 10 returns with one TD. Louisiana Tech K Jonathan Barnes has missed five FGs, but that includes misses of 52 and 64 yards, and he hit a 52-yarder against South Carolina. Rice P Jack Fox is averaging 44 yards per punt. The Owls attempted only one FG in the last four games, a 22-yard make against Pitt by Haden Tobola.

Notable: Louisiana Tech won five of the previous six meetings, including 61-16 last season, 42-17 two years ago and 76-21 in 2014. Rice's only win in the last six is a 52-14 victory in 2013, at Rice Stadium. In last year's setback, the Owls trailed 47-0 early in the third and finished with only 305 yards. RB Boston Scott led Louisiana Tech with 137 yards and three touchdowns on 15 carries.

About Rice: The Owls welcomed Glaesmann and RB Sam Stewart back from injuries, but they couldn't stop hurting themselves in a 20-7 loss to UTSA, which scored a defensive TD off a Glaesmann fumble on the Owls' first offensive series. Glaesmann and QB Mikio Smalls each tossed an INT, and Rice finished with 300 yards in its fifth consecutive loss.

About Louisiana Tech:
The Bulldogs lost another heartbreaker, stumbling 34-27 in two overtimes after Southern Mississippi rallied from an 11-point deficit in the final minutes of regulation. Louisiana Tech suffered one-point losses to South Carolina (17-16) and UAB (23-22) — frustrations they'll try to take out on Rice.

Jason McDaniel